GUIDE TO THE RB1 BALTIC COUNTRIES FILE

[The RB1 Baltic Countries file contains general data on Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. For more specific cultural and historical data see the RB5 Lithuanians file, and the RG4 Estonians file. All three of these countries became provinces of the Russian Empire in the 18th century, gained independence after World War I, were incorporated into the Soviet Union around 1940, and after German occupation during World War II, were returned to the Soviet Union. The three countries are located between 54° and 60° North latitude on the Baltic Sea. On the west the Baltic Sea separates them from Sweden and on the north a gulf separates them from Finland. The RSFSR is on the northeast, the Belorussian SSR is on the southeast, and the People's Republic of Poland is on the south. The Estonian SSR is the most northerly of the three countries, with the Baltic Sea on the west, the Gulf of Finland on the north, the RSFSR on the east and the Latvian SSR on the south. South of the Latvian SSR is the Lithuanian SSR.

There are considerable differences between the three countries. Estonia is somewhat similar in language and culture to Finland. The Estonian language is of the Finnic sub-branch of the Uralic family, while Latvian and Lithuanian are part of the Baltic branch of the Indo-European family. In terms of religion, the Lithuanians are primarily Roman Catholic and the Latvians and Estonians are Lutheran. Since Estonia and Latvia are on the Baltic coast, they have considerable maritime interests. Lithuania is primarily inland and is more agricultural. In addition, industrial development has been slow in Lithuania while Estonia and Latvia developed significant industries while still under the Russian Empire.

In 1938 the total population of the three countries was about 6 million with the greatest density in Lithuania. Only three towns in all three of the countries had populations of over 100,000, the population being relatively dispersed.

According to the 1973 population estimate, the total was just over 7 million. Estonia's population was 1,405,000 with a density of 80.7/sq. mile. Latvia's population was 2,430,000 with a density of 98.8/sq. mile. Lithuania had the largest population, 3,200,000 and the density was 127.1/sq. mile. (1975 Information Please Almanac)

There are three sources in the RB1 Baltic Countries file. 1: Anonymous is an extensive study of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania from the twelfth to the twentieth century. The source concentrates on international and internal political developments, particularly during the period of independence. There are also extensive discussions on the economies of the countries and foreign trade. 2: Anonymous discusses industries in which workers are employed and especially concentrates on wages and working hours. The entire source appears in the 116 category only, descriptive information appears in the categories of the files for the respective countries. 3: Washington and Macgowan is a short article dealing with legislation regarding labor in 1940 in Latvia and Lithuania.

This file contains extremely brief and general data and most of the material was published prior to Soviet rule. The researcher is advised to consult the RG4 Estonians and RB5 Lithuanians file for more specific cultural data and for data regarding these countries under Soviet rule. The file was processed in 1955. During the processing of this file, it was decided to change the Outline of World Cultures designation from RB1 Baltic States to RB1 Baltic Countries. Therefore, both designations occur on pages in this file.]